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Congress of the United States
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ASSISTANT WHIP

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

April 14, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20220

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

The Honorable Andrew Saul
Commissioner
U.S. Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Secretary Mnuchin, Secretary Wilkie, and Commissioner Saul:

I strongly urge your federal agencies to share the necessary data so recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and non-taxable VA benefits (VA Disability Compensation and Veterans Pension) can easily obtain their recovery rebates established by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

I am grateful for your efforts to carry out the portion of the CARES Act permitting Social Security and Railroad retirement beneficiaries to receive recovery rebates automatically based on the 1099 forms sent by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Now I ask that you do the same for the millions of recipients of SSI and non-taxable VA benefits who are deeply in need of recovery rebates and will use them promptly.

When I voted for the CARES Act, our strong intention was to not require recipients of these benefits, who are low-income veterans, senior citizens, and people with disabilities, to file additional information to obtain the rebates. Because of this, some eligible recipients for recovery rebates will never receive them and some may fall victim to scams or identity theft.

To remedy this problem and to comply with Congressional intent regarding Social Security beneficiaries, the applicable federal agencies should share data from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and SSA with the Treasury, so beneficiaries receive their recovery rebates without the need to file additional information.

SSA and the VA's Veterans Benefit Administration have had a computer matching program whereby the VA shares compensation and pension payment data with SSA for various purposes related to SSI, Special Veterans Benefit recipients, and Medicare outreach.

As you can see, there is no reason to require additional information because your federal agencies already have the information needed to pay recovery rebates to recipients of SSI and VA benefits. I urge you to begin the payments as soon as possible. This will help households meet their needs and stimulate their local economies.

Thank you for your consideration to this serious matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Lisa Blunt Rochester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" being the most prominent.

LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER
Member of Congress